WOMEN IN BUSINESS LAW AWARDS 2027

In partnership with THE LAWYER

# WOMEN IN BUSINESS LAW AWARDS GUIDELINES

## EMEA AWARDS

Submissions deadline: January 8, 2027
Awards Ceremony: May 20, 2027

## AMERICAS AWARDS

Submissions deadline: January 8, 2027
Awards Ceremony: June 3, 2027

#WIBLAwards

## Awards Summary

In 2027, the *Women in Business Law Awards* will present the winners of its two regional awards programs – the Americas and Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) – celebrating the most ground-breaking achievements by each region's leading women lawyers and the most progressive law firms in terms of their gender policies, advocacy, and support of women in law. Both programs follow the same framework, methodology and judging standards set out in these guidelines; where a requirement applies to one region only, this is stated.

*The Lawyer* presents the *Women in Business Law Awards* is a part of the Legal Benchmarking Group. The awards are adjudicated by a dedicated awards team that works across a range of titles including Benchmark Litigation, IFLR1000, ITR-World Tax, LMG Life Sciences, and Managing IP.

The Lawyer is widely recognized for delivering in-depth market insight, data-rich analysis, and strategic commentary. This partnership combines The Lawyer's market intelligence and audience reach with the independent research of the Women in Business Law Awards team, extending the visibility of the awards and the recognition of winners across both the Americas and EMEA.
For any information about the awards please contact WiBL@legalbenchmarkinggroup.com.

## Methodology

The *Women in Business Law Awards* celebrates the efforts and achievements of law and professional services firms across the Americas and EMEA in helping women to advance in, and thrive at the top of, the legal profession. It also strives to shine a spotlight on the most impressive achievements by women lawyers during the review period. Awards will be presented along individual, law firm, jurisdictional and in-house category lines.

Law firms and in-house teams are invited to make written nominations detailing their gender employee statistics and their women-friendly working practice and policies, as well as biographical information specific to their women lawyers.
A dedicated research team will review the written nominations across the multiple areas of law and jurisdictions. The team will also incorporate other research from within the group, including relevant research and intelligence from across the brands.

## Register & Submit

The Women in Business Law Awards are moving to a new submission platform on Eventsforce. All participants for both the Americas and EMEA programs will be required to register. Registration for the new platform that will open at the end of November.

To prepare your submissions, complete the short form on **our website** to access and download the relevant submission template. Once the platform opens, completed submissions can be uploaded directly through your registered account. A confirmation email will be sent for submitted entries.

Entries can be edited as many times as necessary prior to submission. Once submitted and the confirmation email has been received, no further amendments can be made.

All nominations should be submitted through the portal. Due to GDPR compliance we cannot accept submissions outside of this portal.

## Deadline

All nominations must be submitted through the portal by the shared deadline: **Friday, January 8, 2027**

## Deciding Process

Final winner decisions will be made by the Women in Business Law Awards team following an extensive research process. Decisions are entirely independent and based solely on the quality and impact of the work that has been detailed. Awards are decided internally with the involvement of a cross-departmental panel spanning Legal Benchmarking Group's different brands. Note: We reserve the right to expand or limit awards categories.

**Individual winners** are judged on their professional accomplishments as well as their advocacy and influence within their fields between January 1 to December 31 of the preceding year (2026). We also assess an individual's leadership, mentorship, and influence.

**Firm and jurisdictional winners** are judged on how they support the development of women in the legal profession and the strength of work/life programs which enable women to pursue legal careers to the very highest levels. Criteria include the ratio of female-to-male lawyers (at all levels of seniority), the retention of women associates to partner level and diversity initiatives.

## Award Categories

### FIRM OF THE YEAR

The awards will recognize the best law firms in the following categories. In the Americas, categories are awarded internationally as well as across Latin America and North America; in EMEA, categories are split between International Firms and National/Jurisdictional Firms:

- Career Development Firms of the Year
- Intersectional Diversity Firms of the Year (formerly Diverse Women Lawyers category)
- Gender Diversity Support Firms of the Year
- Innovative Firms of the Year
- Pro Bono Firms of the Year
- Work-Life Balance Firms of the Year
- Women in Business Law Firms of the Year

We invite firms to nominate themselves using a dedicated Firm of the Year template. There is no entry template for the Women in Business Law Firms of the Year – firms will be shortlisted and awarded based on the evidence submitted across all categories. For international firms, the judges will look at the design and implementation of multi-jurisdictional programs and their roll-out, impact and success. For national firms, the judges will consider how the office is leading the way in its national legal market.

### LAWYERS OF THE YEAR

The lawyers of the year award categories for the Americas and EMEA will be based on the role an individual played on influential deals/cases and their advocacy, influence, and thought leadership during the period. Individuals are recognized within the practice area in which they operate. Candidates should be nominated via the Lawyers of the Year template.

In the Americas, Latin America categories will recognize a lawyer from a national firm based in Latin America, North America categories will recognize a lawyer from a national firm based in North America, and the overall Americas categories will recognize a lawyer from an International Firm. In EMEA, categories will recognize lawyers practicing across the Europe, Middle East and Africa region.

The key criteria are:

- Professional accomplishments: recent highlights and lead roles on legal work (cases and/or deals) from the preceding calendar year
- Advocacy: projects that demonstrate the nominee's advocacy for women in the legal profession, outside of client work
- Influence: decision-making and leadership roles that drive positive change for women in the legal profession within and external to the firm
- Thought leadership: professional creativity and thought leadership, including publications, speaking engagements and involvement in ESG activities that occurred during the research period

These awards may consider nominations for best practitioners in the following categories. Categories apply to both programs unless marked (Americas) or (EMEA). LBG reserves the right to amend or expand the below categories:

- Antitrust & competition
- Aviation
- Banking & finance
- Commercial arbitration
- Copyright
- Corporate governance
- Capital markets (Americas)
- Debt capital markets (EMEA)
- Energy, natural resources & mining
- Equity capital markets (EMEA)
- Environment
- Financial regulation
- Insurance & reinsurance
- International trade
- Investment funds
- Labor & employment
- Life Sciences
- Litigation
- Media & entertainment (Americas)
- Mergers & acquisitions
- Patent
- Privacy & data protection
- Private client & wealth management (EMEA)
- Private equity (incl. venture capital)
- Product liability
- Project finance
- Real estate
- Restructuring & insolvency
- Securities litigation (Americas)
- Shipping & maritime
- Structured finance & securitisation
- Tax
- Tax disputes (EMEA)
- Technology & telecom (Americas)
- Technology, media & telecoms (EMEA)
- Trademark
- Transfer pricing
- Wealth management (Americas)
- White collar crime

*Note: We reserve the right to expand or limit awards categories.*

**INDIVIDUAL SPOTLIGHT AWARDS: THOUGHT LEADERS, ESG LEADERS, OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT**

These categories will be based on the Thought Leadership and ESG Leadership data submitted through the Spotlight Awards template. The award aims to recognize those individuals that are engaged in the most impactful work in pursuing thought leadership opportunities and ESG advocacy. These awards will recognize winners in Latin America, North America and EMEA in the following categories:

- Thought Leader of the Year – we will look at how an individual has defined, led and shaped the field of their practice area
- ESG Leader of the Year – we will consider achievements across ESG broadly, focusing on women who are leading the way in ESG programs, client support and/or how ESG goals are embedded within transactions/cases
- Outstanding Achievement Award – judges will consider an individual's record over the years and their position as a role model to the industry through excelling in their practice area and advocating for women in law

## RISING STARS

A rising star must have under 15 years of professional experience and be undertaking responsibilities that might usually be seen at partner level. Use the Rising Star template to provide nominations.

Rising star lawyers will be awarded in Latin America, North America and EMEA in the following categories:

- Arbitration
- Banking & Finance
- Corporate/M&A
- Intellectual Property
- Litigation
- Tax

## IN-HOUSE

Use the In-House template to provide nominations. In-house awards will be based on leadership in the industry in supporting and promoting women in law, and will be awarded across Latin America, North America and EMEA for the following categories:

- In-House Team of the Year
- In-House Rising Star
- General Counsel of the Year

## JURISDICTIONAL FIRMS OF THE YEAR

Jurisdictional firm of the year awards will be based primarily on the evidence of firm initiatives and demographics included in the Jurisdictional Firms of the Year template. The evaluation will focus on the impact, complexity and innovation of the initiatives, as well as the demographic balance between women and men within the firm at all levels of seniority. For EMEA, entries to the Firm of the Year project initiatives will automatically be considered for Jurisdictional Firm of the Year, so there is no need to repeat initiatives. Jurisdictional firm of the year will be awarded for the following jurisdictions:

### Latin America

- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Central America
- Caribbean
- Chile
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- Mexico
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Uruguay
- Venezuela

### North America

- US Midwest
- US Northeast
- US South
- US West
- Canada

### Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)

- Africa
- Austria
- Baltics
- Benelux
- Central Europe
- Eastern Europe
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- MENA
- Poland
- Portugal
- Saudi Arabia
- Scandinavia
- South-East Europe
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom

*Regional jurisdictions such as the Caribbean, Central America, Africa or Benelux may be broken down to reflect quality and quantity of entries.*

## Definitions

### FIRM AWARDS

#### Career Development

- Mentoring, sponsorship, coaching and talent management
- A mentor is a guide for you to get to your goals on your own
- A sponsor actively tries to get you promoted
- A coach is usually external to the company and sits with you one-on-one
- Recruiting, retaining, promoting and training initiatives
- Leadership development programs

#### Intersectional Diversity (formerly Diverse Women Lawyers category)

- Support for women from diverse backgrounds, including race, LGBTQ, disability, social mobility, etc.
- Programs, groups, or initiatives that integrate gender with other dimensions of diversity

#### Gender Diversity Support

- Groups and networks
- Gender-based events that promote visibility, connection, and empowerment
- Initiatives and impact by women's groups/networks within respective firms or within external networks

#### Pro bono

- Pro bono work that supports women's rights and working conditions
- Social/community engagement programs where the work is relevant to women and gender diversity issues.
- Legal work involving disadvantaged communities, access to justice and fair treatment.

#### Work-life Balance

- Flexible working, maternity leave, and groups for parents at law firms
- Maternity/transition coaching
- Childcare and other innovative initiatives that support work-life balance.

#### Innovation

- It can include projects that fall into any or all other firm categories, with the exclusive criterion being innovation
- We look for interesting, new initiatives that are in the pipeline or recently launched
- Evidence that impact is being made

### INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

#### Advocacy

- The ways in which the nominee has advocated for women in the legal industry
- Mentorship, sponsorship, being a part of or leading groups that promote women in law

#### Influence

- The extent to which the nominee has influenced policy and change within or external to the firm for the promotion of women in the law

### Thought Leadership

- Examples of thought leadership activities, such as publishing articles or books, speaking engagements, panel memberships, within the nominee's practice area specialism or in reference to supporting women in law.

### ESG Leadership

Examples of engagement and leadership in ESG initiatives and advocacy work includes:

- Environmental – which includes waste and pollution, resource depletion, greenhouse gas emission, deforestation, climate change issues, and biodiversity
- Social – which includes employee relations, employee affinity and intersectional collaboration, diversity, working conditions, conflict, and community engagement
- Governance – which includes executive remuneration, donations and lobbying, as well as board diversity and structure

### Outstanding Achievement

- Includes exceptional accomplishments, whether through career achievements, major contributions to the legal community, or transformative work that has set new standards for women in the industry. We will also consider impact and dedication.

## IN-HOUSE

### In-house Team

- Team awards recognize the teams for their contributions to business engagement, inclusion of modern technologies, development of new specialisms within the team, growth in team size, relationship and engagement with the CEO and executive team, and around the company

### In-House Rising Star

- Individual awards recognize the individual for their contributions and role on impactful work, as well as their advocacy for women in business law.
- A nominee must have under 15 years of professional experience and be undertaking responsibilities that might usually be seen at senior level.
- An In-House Rising Star is considered an emerging professional with demonstrable talent, potential, and achievement early in their career.

### General Counsel

- General counsel awards recognize the best woman general counsels for their impact in business facilitating and thought leadership.

## CONTACT US

If you have any questions about the research process or entering the Women in Business Law Awards, please contact:
WiBL@legalbenchmarkinggroup.com